

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, December 14, 1995

Published Since 1877

Tiny Union Association church has world-sized vision

By Guy Henderson

Pleasant Hill Church is an open country church between Hazlehurst and Fayette in Union Association.

The church's attendance ranges from 20 to 35, but the members form a mission-minded congregation. Missionaries from various fields of service are often invited to speak at Pleasant Hill.

The church regularly gives a remarkable 10% to the Cooperative Program (the overall SBC average is 7.5%), on top of supporting local and associational missions.

In 1994, with a total budget of \$24,455, Pleasant Hill gave \$4,172 to missions — associational, Cooperative Program, special offerings, etc.

The church was organized in 1844 and at one time had a large membership. Since its constitution, about five other churches have been established near Pleasant Hill.

There are now 62 members. In spite of being a small church, it has regular Sunday School, Discipleship Training, and a music program.

Robert Carr, pastor for the past 28 years, said the people are good, hard-working Christians who practice loving one another.

Carr believes training in discipleship is the strength of small churches like Pleasant Hill. This is the thing that "feeds the missionary effort," he said. "Where there is love, the people will serve each other and have an enlarged vision of world missions."

The 70-year-old pastor maintained the church is certainly not seeking publicity nor any glory. It was only with the hope that their story might encourage other struggling churches that he consented to



Colleen Carr (left) and Frances Ivy, members of Pleasant Hill Church in Union Association, prepare food boxes for local shut-ins.

be interviewed for **The Baptist Record**.

"Let the Lord receive all the glory and honor. We are nothing but servants," he reiterated.

In Mississippi there are a few large churches with more than 1,000 in Sunday School and budgets over a million dollars. There are far more small churches ministering in areas of declining population where the churches also have declined. Is a ministry needed in such areas?

There are 1,981 Baptist churches in Mississippi; 1,359 of those are classified as "open country or village." Of this number, 1,331 have ongoing Sunday Schools and 1,220 give to missions through the Cooperative Program.

There are 115 Mississippi Baptist

churches with less than 49 members, 255 churches with 50-99 members, 327 churches with 100-149 members, and 260 churches with 150-199 members. This means Mississippi Baptists have more than 660 churches with less than 200 members (according to the **Southern Baptist Handbook**).

Many leaders in churches, colleges, and on the mission fields came from these small churches. Southern Baptists' rural background has provided a dimension of dedication and sincerity which has served us well.

We need to be thankful for all the churches like Pleasant Hill across Mississippi, and for their faithfulness to the Lord.



The Pleasant Hill congregation meets in an older building which has been completely remodeled. A new fellowship hall (foreground) serves as meeting place and work center for the church community.

Planting the seed

Followers of New Age religions may seem like off-beat "flower children" to Christians, but special care must be taken to reach them for Christ, according to Bill Gordon, associate director of the Interfaith Witness Department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta. "New Agers are some of the hardest people to witness to because of their beliefs. They believe they are God and there is no such thing as sin. On the other hand, they're open to spiritual things and willing to talk," said Gordon, a specialist in world religions. New Age movements have no central headquarters, and typically believe in reincarnation and the concept that all reality — everything from animals to space — is God, he explained. Gordon advises Christians to point out inconsistencies between what New Agers claim to believe and how they live. For example, since many New Agers believe they are God, Gordon said, the pertinent question would be, "Have you ever wondered why you're having (problems in your life) if you're God?"

Spiritual Americans

People who read their Bibles, attend church, and value their relationship with God are more content than people who overlook those aspects of their lives, as revealed in a recent survey commissioned by the American Bible Society. While most respondents reported being "very satisfied" (53%) or "somewhat satisfied" (40%) with their lives, those who added Bible reading to their lives at least once a week rose to 58% in the "very satisfied" category. The survey also pointed out that Americans attend church about as often as they eat out: 55% said they attend church at least once a week and 53% said they go out for dinner at least once a week. Far fewer Americans read a novel (27%), play the lottery (25%), or go dancing (10%), according to the survey. A total of 92% of the survey respondents own at least one Bible, with the King James Version being the most popular (50%). Eugene Habecker, president of the New York-based American Bible Society, said, "This survey confirms what we have long believed was true — Americans are a deeply spiritual people."

Looking Back...

10 years ago

First Church, Yazoo City, inaugurates its new 30-rank pipe organ with a dedication recital by William E. Gray Jr. of Waynesboro, who designed the organ for the church while employed by M.P. Moeller Pipe Organ Co. of Maryland.

20 years ago

A check from Galilee Church, Mississippi Association, puts Mississippi Cooperative Program receipts over \$6,000,000 for the first time; a check from Parkhill Church, Jackson, brings the state convention's receipts to \$10,000,000, another first.

50 years ago

Former Hernando school superintendent and bivocational pastor W.C. Boone, presently pastor of Crescent Hill Church in Lexington, Ky., is elected general secretary-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

The Christmas boycott

Blinded by the bright lights? Sick of Rudolph and all the other sleigh-pullers? Do you ever find yourself wishing Christmas was over?

This Grinch-like spirit starts earlier each year, as do the decorations, sales, and "Jingle Bells." Mixed in with all the tinsel is a faint whisper, "Joy to the World, the Lord has come."

Most of us waver a bit each year, knowing we are entering into a season which is commercialized unto its religious death. The wise men came to Jesus bringing their gifts, and the gifts have grown to overshadow the cradle.

*We would see Jesus; lo, his star
is shining;
Haste, let us lay our gifts
before the king.*

Others face a chilling schedule of long hours, office parties, church banquets, and kinsmen coming by the dozens. Traffic triples and stopping for a few groceries can shoot an hour. No cakes or pies in escrow; you have to start from scratch. Busy, breathless,

and now you want to add Bethlehem!

*The light that shone on Bethlehem,
fills all the world today,
Of Jesus' birth and peace on earth,
the angels sing always.*

For others there will be the numbing memories. Loving parents who are with them no more; a child, a car accident, and the vacuum is deep and wide.

A shattered home, a divorce plunging a couple into an immersion of misery, children unable to comprehend can only cry and cling... first to one and then the other. It may be the homeless, the runaway, or the sorrowing, but Christmas intensifies their memories and their hurts.

*Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains
prolong?
What the glad tidings be,
Which inspire your heavenly
song?*

Politics, troops in Bosnia, inflation eroding your paycheck — the

cost of living causing the check to be shorter and the months longer.

What's the point? What is the reason for such a hectic season? How can I take time to smell the roses in a hurricane of activity?

*No more let sin and sorrow
grow;
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings
flow,
Far as the curse is found.*

Is there not some way we can gain control of the schedule? Must the Gift be lost in the wrappings and ribbons that will fade away?

We must draw aside, for it would be a tragedy to miss the real celebration — to miss the deep joy of the birth of Christ, who forgives all our sins and sets us free. Let's boycott the meaningless and embrace the true message.

*Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born
this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given.
Word of the Father, now in
flesh appearing.
O Come, let us adore Him!*

First Person...

Through life's hard changes, we must listen, trust God's leading

By Faye McCraw

In 1987 my church experienced a split. My family and I had been active members there for 17 years.

Many tears were shed, and many friendships and families were torn apart.

A split is the most emotional and heart-breaking situation any church can experience. May I say to you if your church is traversing through such a trial, please do not let your emotions or gossip-mongers rule your thoughts. Pray, pray, pray for all you are worth.

The wounds of a broken church can never be healed. I can attest to one other fact: if your church life is not right, nothing in all the world will give you peace.

I want to share with you the miracle that came out of that event.

We had left our church and were visiting many congregations searching for a church home when two of our close friends, who still attended our former congregation, invited us to a

revival service at that church.

We had been away about two months at that time. We went that night with our friends and found

*"I felt a touch on my
left shoulder, and an
audible voice said,
"Trust me." I turned to
see who had done this....
No one was there."*

"the other side" had complete control of everything. I just did not think I could stay in the pew.

People were performing tasks that — only a few weeks before — we had done. I felt I must escape.

I prayed: "Lord, I cannot do this. This is so very difficult. I

cannot do this." I suppose it was a prayer, a call for help, but I did not feel much like praying.

While sitting there with all this tumult occurring in my life, I felt a touch on my left shoulder, and an audible voice said, "Trust me."

I turned to see who had done this, who could have read my thoughts, who could know my pain. No one was there. No physical being was within two pews of us.

Who had said: "Trust me?" The services began, but I have no idea what was sung or said. The thought of the touch and the voice occupied my every fiber.

The service ended, and I knew that hand-shaking and hugs were coming. Again, I thought: "I cannot do this. I cannot love these people."

No audible voice came, but a clear message did come from the Lord: "You can love them through me."

I had made big plans to turn my head and not shake hands

with or speak to my enemies, but I did "trust Him," and through him I was able to shake hands and give hugs to people he loved.

The next week, the minister of music at the church where I worked brought in a tape of a sermon by E.V. Hill titled, "Trust Me." God had a message for my life. He knew what the next few years of my life held and he knew I needed a miracle to see me through.

In May 1988, my husband, mother-in-law, and brother-in-law were involved in a car accident. My husband survived, but we attended a double funeral for his mother and brother.

My husband was in the back seat of the vehicle. He was injured and went through three surgeries, but the trauma of the accident haunts his life to this day. He lost

Nashville. He remembered the occasion and commented about a story we had told of a Korean Air Force sergeant we had known.

Hobbs had been in the ministry for 69 years — a lifetime of telling people about Jesus. W.A. Criswell of Dallas said of him, "Our Southern Baptist Zion has lost one of its greatest stalwarts, one of its greatest preachers...."

Truly, a mighty oak has fallen.
— GH

his job. In 1989 he returned to college, packing a four-year course load into three years.

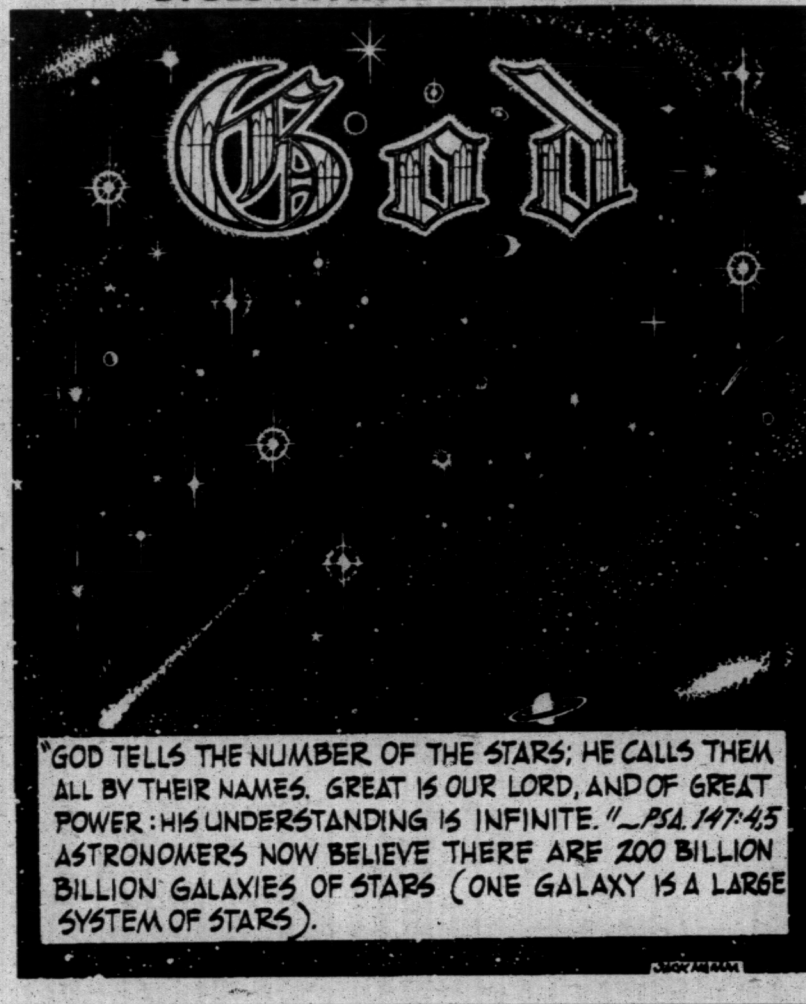
God knew we needed a miracle. He gave us a difficult task, which was simply to trust him. He gave us no answers as to why our church split, what our future would hold, and if we would find a loving church family again. No answers came — only maps. He said only, "Trust me."

That message is still good today. We have found a loving church family and learned to trust him daily. I know not what tomorrow may bring, but I know it is in his hands.

If you find your life shattered and filled with questions, simply "Trust him."

Laurel resident McCraw is a recent graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi.

EVOLUTIONISTS ARE BAFFLED



"GOD TELLS THE NUMBER OF THE STARS; HE CALLS THEM ALL BY THEIR NAMES. GREAT IS OUR LORD, AND OF GREAT POWER: HIS UNDERSTANDING IS INFINITE." — *PSA 147:4-5*
ASTRONOMERS NOW BELIEVE THERE ARE 200 BILLION BILLION GALAXIES OF STARS (ONE GALAXY IS A LARGE SYSTEM OF STARS).

THE FRAGMENTS

A mighty oak has fallen

The death of Herschel H. Hobbs triggered a flood of memories for believers all across our land. He paid a great tribute to pastors when he said, "If I had 10,000 lives to live, I would want to be a pastor in every one of them."

Dr. and Mrs. Hobbs visited our mission field home in Taejon, Korea, in 1959. We shared a meal and enjoyed some great fellowship. Last February we saw Hobbs in

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Reconciliation conference takes look at unifying body of Christ

By William H. Perkins Jr.

Lots of people talk about racial reconciliation. Mississippi Baptists are doing something about it.

"A Look at Reconciliation in the New Testament," a conference sponsored by the Missions Extension and Associational Administration (MEAA) Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), was held recently at the Baptist Building in downtown Jackson.

The meeting brought together 58 men and women from a number of church congregations across Mississippi to discuss the often-difficult topics of reconciliation and unification within the body of Christ.

Key speakers on the program were Harold Bryson, professor of Christian studies and philosophy at Mississippi College in Clinton,

and Arthur Siggers, pastor of Mt. Olive Church in Hattiesburg.

"The meeting really concentrated on the practicality of racial reconciliation. We got down to the actual 'How do we do it?' and that is good," said Richard Brogan, MEAA consultant in charge of the conference.

Charles Thomas, pastor of Beacon Mission in Yazoo City, attended the conference and led a small group discussion.

"There was a real openness, a real genuineness about wanting to do it (reconciliation) but not knowing how," Thomas said.

"We have allowed our culture to hinder the gospel for too long. We need to do the job the Holy Spirit called us to do. We know what needs to be done; we just need to do it. We need to decide,

"What's the next step?" he said.

For more information on Baptist reconciliation efforts in Mississippi, contact Brogan at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

Mississippi Baptists are also involved in Mission Mississippi, a Jackson-based organization that promotes year-round activities and events to foster racial and denominational reconciliation in Mississippi. Mission Mississippi rallies are held each October in the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson.

For more information on the Mission Mississippi program, contact executive director Jarvis Ward at P.O. Box 22655, Jackson, MS 39225-2655. Telephone: (601) 353-6477.



Charles Thomas (center), pastor of Beacon Mission in Yazoo City, leads a small group discussion during "A Look at Reconciliation in the New Testament," a recent conference at the Baptist Building in Jackson that dealt with the concept of reconciliation among Mississippi Christians. Bill Patrick (left) of North Jackson Church, Jackson, and John G. McDonald (right) of Jackson participated in the discussion. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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Retirement center talks still on table with Medical Center

By Tim Nicholas

A Baptist continuing care retirement community could be up and running in metro Jackson in as little as two years, if the wheels already set in motion continue at the same pace.

On Dec. 5, the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), meeting in Jackson, agreed to continue talks with the Mississippi Baptist Medical Center over the next 30 days to develop a joint venture which would, in turn, set up an organizational structure for the development.

The retirement community would likely be operated by a separate corporation with trustees provided jointly by the hospital and the convention board, said Bill Causey, MBCB executive director-treasurer.

Financial responsibility would be evenly divided, but cash outlays are not expected. Instead, Causey said, start-up money probably would come from lending institutions or bond sales. Before much investment is made, participation in the community would be pre-sold, he said.

"Cooperative Program funds will not be at risk," Causey said.

The general plan is for Jackson to be the first of several sites around Mississippi for the ministry. In Jackson there would be some detached housing and duplexes for independent living, as well as apartments for assisted living and a section with

rooms for those requiring skilled care.

Because of a current freeze on additional Medicare beds, it will be necessary for participants to be basically self-supporting. However, Causey said, efforts will be made to provide quality facilities at reasonable costs.

The program would be set up as a not-for-profit, tax exempt corporation under the 501(c)(3) designation of the Internal Revenue Service.

Jeffrey Kuehl, a partner in Amherst Senior Living Associates of Evanston, Ill., is providing advice for the convention board and the hospital. The organization is a consulting service primarily for non-profit retirement facilities.

Kuehl estimated budget requirements for construction of a first facility, with up to 180 apartment units and 40 to 60 assisted living units, would be about \$16.4 million. Phased construction, he said, would reduce requirements for seed money and the size of any bond issue.

Although Amherst Senior Living Associates does development consulting, no discussion has been made as to whom the job of development would be given.

Causey told the MBCB that a final vote on such a ministry would require a special called meeting of either the MBCB or the Mississippi Baptist Convention itself.

Nicholas is director, MBCB Office of Communication.

Exec. Committee approves money for BSU centers

By Tim Nicholas

The Executive Committee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), meeting in Jackson Dec. 5, voted repairs at two Baptist student centers, approved purchase of audio visual equipment for the board, and raised the maximum income allowed for financial aid to forced terminated ministers.

These decisions were in addition to detailed talks concerning the proposal to begin a retirement facility ministry, approved by both the Executive Committee and the convention board. (See related story, above.)

The Baptist Student Union (BSU) center at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hat-

tiesburg was given the nod to complete work on its parking lot and kitchen up to \$17,000.

The BSU center at Northeast Mississippi Community College in Booneville will have its heat pump and air conditioner repaired at a cost of up to \$3,000.

A new video projector for staff use will be purchased by the MBCB Broadcast Services Department at a cost of up to \$3,550. Up to \$1,950 was approved for purchase of additional storage equipment for the department's video ministry.

The committee made a change in the board's program of financial aid to forced ter-

minated ministers. Guidelines said that those whose total family income exceeded \$1,000 per month were not eligible. The new guideline increases that amount to \$1,500.

Also, the committee approved giving the Mississippi Baptist Foundation \$4,000 to be matched by the Foundation to pay for an upcoming meeting hosted by the Foundation of representatives from the other state Baptist foundations.

Michael O'Brien of Holmes Association was approved as a new board member.

Nicholas is director, MBCB Office of Communication.

"Celebrate Jesus 2000" evangelism campaign launched by HMB

JACKSON, Wyo. (BP) — A five-year plan to share the gospel in every household in America is being developed by the Home Mission Board.

Known as "Celebrate Jesus 2000," the process includes training, prayer, personal witnessing, evangelistic crusades, and publicity.

Larry Lewis, HMB president, called the strategy "Spirit-led and God-directed." Using Mark 16 as a reference, Lewis said the success of Celebrate Jesus 2000 depends in part on whether Christians really believe in hell.

"Too many Christians, deep in their hearts, don't believe that people without God are really that bad off." Believing that Jesus is the only way to escape eternal punishment will motivate Christians to share Christ, Lewis said during an HMB-sponsored annual meeting of evangelism leaders from across the Southern Baptist Convention.

After being trained to witness and praying for lost people, Southern Baptists will be encouraged to share the gospel "house to house, door to door, and face to face," Lewis said. The witnessing thrust will help churches

discover prospects and also create a community awareness of the church's ministry.

"People Sharing Jesus" is the training process emphasized by the HMB evangelism staff. It is designed to help Christians witness in their everyday settings. It suggests a number of witnessing approaches which can be taught in a variety of settings.

The final phase of "Celebrate Jesus 2000" is mass evangelistic programs such as crusades and revivals. One component will be "YouthLink," simultaneous youth rallies to be held in seven cities Dec. 29, 1999, through 1 a.m. Jan. 1, 2000. The rallies will be transmitted via satellite to churches across the country.

Publicity efforts will include national television, radio and newspaper advertisements, including public service announcements, to be released next fall.

Richard Harris, HMB director of mass evangelism, is working with other evangelical groups around the world to encourage their efforts for soul-winning. "We want to join hearts and hands to take the gospel to every person," Harris said.

Baptist Foundation trustees air qualms over agency's fate

NASHVILLE (BP) — The Baptist Foundation, facing a clouded future under the proposed restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), has experienced a "dramatic halt in growth of assets," the agency's president, Hollis E. Johnson III, told trustees at their Dec. 6 annual meeting in Nashville.

Trustees voted unanimously to authorize their executive committee to "develop and share its concerns about the assimilation of the Southern Baptist Foundation into the Covenant for a New Century plan" — the restructuring approved by messengers to the 1995 SBC annual meeting in Atlanta, which includes a provision assigning the foundation's work to the SBC Executive Committee.

Key among concerns voiced by trustees during the meeting was "ascending liability."

Ascending liability is when one corporation inappropriately controls another corporation, the controlling corporation can be held liable for the wrongs and debts of the controlled corpora-

tion, said James Guenther, SBC counsel.

Guenther told Baptist Press "there is no reason to believe the Implementation Task Force will recommend any implementation plan which will create greater ascending liability risks for the Southern Baptist Convention. Ascending liability is one of many issues which will shape the implementation recommendations from the task force."

Another concern to trustees: donor faith in the Foundation's autonomy and expertise in managing funds, now totaling more than \$183 million.

At the outset of trustee discussion of the Foundation and its future, chairman Leonard M. Brannan of Chattanooga, Tenn., said: "We want to work with the Convention... to make the best changes possible," but he said he believes it best the Foundation continue as a separate legal entity.

Johnson and Brannan met with a representative of the Implementation Task Force, John Yarbrough, after the trustees'

morning meeting Dec. 6, along with Foundation legal counsel Jack W. Robinson Sr. and Guenther. The 10-member Implementation Task Force was created by the SBC Executive Committee in September to oversee the restructuring process.

In a Dec. 7 interview, Johnson said the meeting was a question-and-answer informational session.

Said Johnson: "We have confidence in the system to produce the right governance for the Foundation and would urge all clients to adopt a wait-and-see attitude before making any decisions related to this implementation."

Yarbrough attended the trustees' discussion of the SBC restructuring and, afterward, was introduced by Brannan and accorded an opportunity to speak. Yarbrough is senior pastor of First Church, Perry, Ga.; president of the Baptist Convention of Georgia; and a member of the SBC Executive Committee.

Johnson, earlier in his president's report to trustees, said

growth in the Foundation's assets ended about the same time the Covenant for a New Century was introduced, at the February meeting of the SBC Executive Committee, which voted to recommend the restructuring to the June SBC annual meeting.

For the overall fiscal year, Oct. 1-Sept. 30, Foundation assets grew by 8.87%, with principal assets accounting for 4.92% of the gain and increases in the assets' market value accounting for 3.95%.

The "main objection" to the restructuring according to Foundation clients, Johnson said, is the "perceived lack of independence" of the SBC Executive Committee in handling donor funds.

Ascending liability also was noted by Johnson, citing a monumental lawsuit now in the Texas court system naming numerous benevolent entities, including the SBC and the Southern Baptist Foundation, as a key example of the need for ascending liability protection within the SBC structure.

Several trustees voiced strong reservations about placing responsibility for managing donor funds with the SBC Executive Committee.

"We are not going to leave the funds in a new organization to see how they do," said trustee

William M. Hamm of Louisiana, speaking of New Orleans Seminary where he also is a trustee. The seminary has confidence in the current Foundation and is putting more funds into it, Hamm said. "But we're not going to let somebody experiment with the amount of funds we have," he said.

The seminary to date, however, has not withdrawn funds from the Foundation.

Hamm said he did not intend to voice a threat but only to raise a question comparing the confidence built up in the Southern Baptist Foundation over the years to uncertainty over how the Executive Committee would operate a "brand-new" foundation.

Although not a trustee, W.L. "Bo" Childs Jr., president and treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Foundation, the Southern Baptist Foundation's largest client with \$23 million invested in donor gifts, spoke during the discussion.

No matter how much money, or how little, the Tennessee Foundation has invested, Childs said the state would be "very concerned about what happens to the Southern Baptist Foundation," especially in light of how the Foundation has been strengthened during Johnson's 19 years as president.

CLC official endorses campaign to monitor "trashy" talk shows

By Keith Hinson

TUPELO (BP) — A campaign to monitor "trashy TV talk shows" has been launched by the American Family Association (AFA) and endorsed by the head of the Christian Life Commission.

The monitoring effort was announced in a front-page story in the November/December issue of the **AFA Journal** published by the Tupelo-based organization.

"We hope that supporters (of the campaign) will get their friends, family, and members of their churches and Sunday school classes to participate in

gathering the needed information," said Donald E. Wildmon, AFA president and a United Methodist minister.

The campaign seeks volunteers who will complete forms describing the date, content, and advertisers of the talk shows being aired in their broadcast markets.

Richard Land, CLC president, praised the AFA's campaign and said he hopes the effort will motivate citizens concerned about the state of the nation's media.

"I applaud the AFA's effort to rouse those millions of Americans

who still cherish traditional morality and decency to active engagement with an entertainment industry that seems bent to push the envelope of public morality as far as it can," Land said.

"We're asking other people across the country to track shows in their areas. They would perhaps get some of the shows we don't (in the Tupelo area)."

As a result of the monitoring, the journal article said, "AFA will identify and release a list of the sponsors of the shows such as Ricki Lake, Geraldo, Sally Jessy Raphael, Donahue, etc."

Gayle Alexander, pastor of First Church, Tupelo, and an AFA board member, praised the AFA's appeals for individual Christians to be involved.

"The AFA is not out on the streets, infringing on personal property rights of people or anything like that," he said. "That kind of thing I don't agree with. I don't agree with anything that has to do with civil disobedience.... AFA's appeals by and large have been appeals to people."

Alexander, a member of the board of directors for the Southern Baptist Education Commission, said a key role of the AFA is to educate TV consumers about how advertising dollars are being spent.

"AFA has done a great job in terms of researching what companies are doing and simply in making the public aware," Alexander said.

For more information on the monitoring effort, the AFA may be contacted at (601) 844-5036.

Hinson is a free-lance writer in Montevallo, Ala.



LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

What can I say to a friend who is convinced that God could never love him?

Christmas is a wonderful time to talk with a lost friend about this subject. For some reason unknown to you (and possibly unknown to him), he cannot accept the emotion of love. There may be abandonment, abuse, or alcoholism in his life that fuels his conviction about love. I suspect a strong hurt for which God has gotten the blame and been rejected. Ask him, "What keeps you from accepting the love of God?" Don't ask "why" questions and don't pry about feelings. Be the love of God to your friend, and be consistent in the face of rejection. He may put your love to the test, as they did Christ, but show him that you will never leave or reject him, just as Christ responded.

Is it wrong to allow my children to believe in Santa Claus? We talk about Jesus all the time, but I wonder if Santa Claus is confusing them.

This issue divides a crowd faster than God parting the Red Sea. At the very time Christians are celebrating our Savior's birth, the world is bombarding us with the materialism of the season. This distracts us from the real issue of who controls our lives. As a Christian family, what are your priorities at Christmas? To answer those questions, consider:

— Do you spend more money on presents than you give to your church and to mission support?

— Can your children explain to their friends the real reason we celebrate Christmas?

— Does your family look upon Santa Claus as the "fun" of Christmas who is able to bring everything they want?

Jesus Christ is the Son of God; Santa Claus is merely a cultural phenomenon. Santa may be the surprise of the season, but Christ is the Savior of the world. There is room for both only when Christ is given top priority. The earlier you establish this with your children, the better. As they mature and the Santa myth fades, they will have something of worth with which to replace it.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.



MC singers take honors

Mississippi College music students Annadair Ingram (second from left) and Phillip Hill (third from left) recently won first place honors in their divisions in the Regional Auditions held by the National Association of Teachers of Singing in Arkadelphia, Ark. Ingram is a senior vocal performance major from Jackson; Hill is a junior vocal performance major from Jackson. Gerald R. Claxton (left), MC assistant professor of music, is Ingram's instructor. Richard Joiner (right), head of the MC Music Department, is Hill's professor.

HOUSE TOPS

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops. Matthew 10:27 NAS

December 14, 1995

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Office of Communication.

Putting a Personal Face on The Cooperative Program



Missionary Moments helps to personalize the Cooperative Program. We often wonder where our Cooperative Program gifts go or who are those 8,000 home and foreign missionaries? Here's a tool to remind us of who and where.

Missionary Moments is a prayer guide designed for use by church leaders on a weekly basis. It contains 52 small perforated sheets with information and prayer requests for 104 different Southern Baptist missionaries. A different person and mission work can become the prayer focus for each Sunday worship service.

Many churches have used **Missionary Moments** for years and wouldn't do without it. Other churches have yet to discover how helpful it can become. Not only does it present mission information, it also helps enrich the content of that traditional offertory prayer.

Missionary Moments is available upon request from the Stewardship Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. The 1996 edition will be included in the Light Packet mailed to all pastors in December, 1995.

SINGLE ADULT RALLY

Saturday, January 13, 1996

Tate Baptist Church
1201 Harper Road, Corinth 38834
Phone: 601-286-2855



SCHEDULE

Registration:

6:30 p.m.

Fellowship:

7:00 p.m.

Drama Presentation:

8:00 p.m.

COST

\$5 early registration
(Call Tate Baptist Church.)

\$7 at the door

FEATURING

Fishworks from
Atlanta, Ga.

MOTELS

Days Inn
601-286-9704

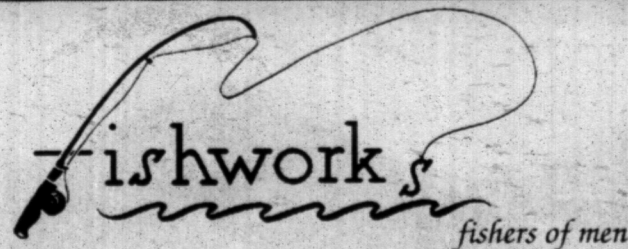
Executive Inn
601-286-6071

Econo Lodge
601-287-4421

Rates:

Double -
\$36-\$37 plus tax

Single -
\$35 plus tax



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Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
Discipleship & Family Ministry Department
"Helping to Bring Mississippi and the World to Jesus"

Pray this day... December 15-January 11

Prayer Ministry Office • P. O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 968-3800, Ext. 3904 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY

Dr. Jimmy Porter as he leads our convention							missionaries who are working in World A setting
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
1. <i>hearts concerned in the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering</i>	strength for our flourishing foreign missionaries who are speaking a lot during this time	MKs who will be spending Christmas away from their families	special Christmas activities in your church	missionary Betty Hart and the Covefi Mission in Chile, which is moving toward church organization in March	gratitude for God's blessings and care	homeless and hungry around us	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
parents with alienated children	thanksgiving for the coming of Jesus into the world	Dr. Jerry Rankin as he directs the Foreign Mission Board	our partnership countries, Honduras and Venezuela	established churches in Thailand to grow spiritually	your local church congregation	unsaved loved ones	
31	1	2	3	4	5	6	
broken homes and hurting families	JANUARY 1996 each pastor in our state	those who suffer from terminal diseases	Baptist Building staff members	your director of missions	a desire to be a better witness for the Lord	state government officials	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
service people who make life better for the rest of us	VBS meeting in Baptist churches in Chile	students as they begin a new semester	men and women who work with students in Mississippi colleges and universities	our partnership state, Colorado			



FEBRUARY

The numbers indicate the day of the month and the year of birth. For instance, 3-76 means February 3, 1976.

3-84 — Mr. David J. Collins, 14604 Goldfish Pond Ave., Austin, TX 78728-5451; Parents: Charles & Suzanne, General Evangelism, SERVE IN SURINAME

4-85 — Mr. David M. Johnston, Caixa Postal 2053 Jockey, 64.049-970 Teresina, PI, EQUATORIAL BRAZIL; Parents: Vincent & Sharon, Conference/Encampment

5-75 — Miss Sharon Parker, William Carey College, P. O. Box 1353, Hattiesburg, MS 39401; Parents: Ronnie & Beth, Music Promotion, SERVE IN BRAZIL

7-88 — Miss Carrie E. Hammack, 169 Boundary St., Kowloon, HONG KONG; Parents: Duane & Sandy, Social Ministry

7-85 — Mr. Adrian G. Martin, Casilla de Correo 5, 8400 San Carlos de Bariloche, ARGENTINA; Parents: Asbury & Hope, General Evangelism

10-84 — Miss Lindsay N. Hearn, BP 1353, Lome, TOGO; Parents: James & Brenda, General Evangelism

15-86 — Miss Lauren E. Marshall, P.O. Box 1949, Prentiss, MS 39474, Parents: Philip & Sheila, General Evangelism, SERVE IN THAILAND

15-81 — Mr. Aaron G. Massey, Sucursal 5, Casilla de Correo 11, 1900 La Plata, ARGENTINA; Parents: Gregory & Karen, Music Promotion

15-79 — Miss Dee Ann Booth, 233 Stonecastle Drive, Brandon, MS 39042-8072; Parents: Jim & Edith Ann, Language Pastor (Deaf)

26-80 — Miss Kena Jones, 875 Adams Drive, Greenville, MS 38703-6060; Parents: Eddie & Barbara, Pastor

GA/ACTEENS DAYS

***WILLIAM CAREY COLLEGE**
JANUARY 27, 1996

Time: 3:00 p.m.
(program begins)

Ballgame: 5:00 p.m.

Cost: \$7.50 per person
(includes program, limited insurance, supper, and the game)

Deadline: January 22, 1996

***BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE**
FEBRUARY 17, 1996

Time: 11:30 a.m.
(program begins)

Ballgame: 2:00 p.m.

Cost: \$7.50 per person
(includes program, limited insurance, supper, and the game)

Deadline: February 12, 1996

***MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE**
FEBRUARY 17, 1996

Time: 3:30 p.m. (program begins)

Ballgame: 5:45 p.m.

Cost: \$7.50 per person
(includes program, limited insurance, supper, and the game)

Deadline: February 12, 1996

* Limited seating

School Choice for GA/Acteens Day _____	
Name of Church _____	
Association _____	
Leader Name (Person sending registration) _____	
Address _____	
Daytime Phone Number _____	
Church Phone Number _____	
Amount Enclosed: \$7.50 x # _____ = \$ _____	
(Please make checks payable to: Woman's Missionary Union)	
Mail to:	
GA/Acteens Day at _____ (School Above)	
Woman's Missionary Union	
P.O. Box 530	
Jackson, MS 39205	

HOUSE TOPS

1996 DEACON EMPHASIS WEEK



Deacon Emphasis Week . . .

is a plan with specific actions that highlights deacon ministries and involves deacon training and service.

The Purpose Of This Emphasis Is To:

- Focus on the biblical role of deacons
- Build a team relationship in ministry
- Secure involvement in specific ministry
- Develop skills for ministry

Deacon Emphasis Week may be conducted during January 14-21, 1996, or any other time during the year.

To participate, the deacons would choose at least two actions and perform them during a specified time (preferably during **Deacon Emphasis Week**). See the possible activities listed in this brochure.

A certificate of recognition will be presented to each deacon body that officially participates.

Suggested Activities . . .

- Study a deacon diploma book
- Conduct a deacon's retreat or conference
- Conduct Pastor/Staff Appreciation Day
- Enter the Deacon Family Ministry Plan
- Sponsor a special ministry project
- Sponsor a mission tour
- Sponsor a project to improve church fellowship
- Listen to cassette tapes
- Watch video tapes
- Enter Deacon/Pastor Covenant to work together as partners in ministry
- Subscribe to "The Deacon" or "Growing Churches" magazine for all deacons
- Promote and pray for revival
- Organize and conduct effort to reclaim inactive church members
- Conduct an in-house survey of the local church
- Conduct deacon-led witnessing/visitation/prospect-find activities

For other projects and information, contact:
 Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department
 Matt Buckles, Consultant
 P. O. Box 530
 Jackson, MS 39205
 (601) 968-3800, extension 3907; or 1-800-748-1651

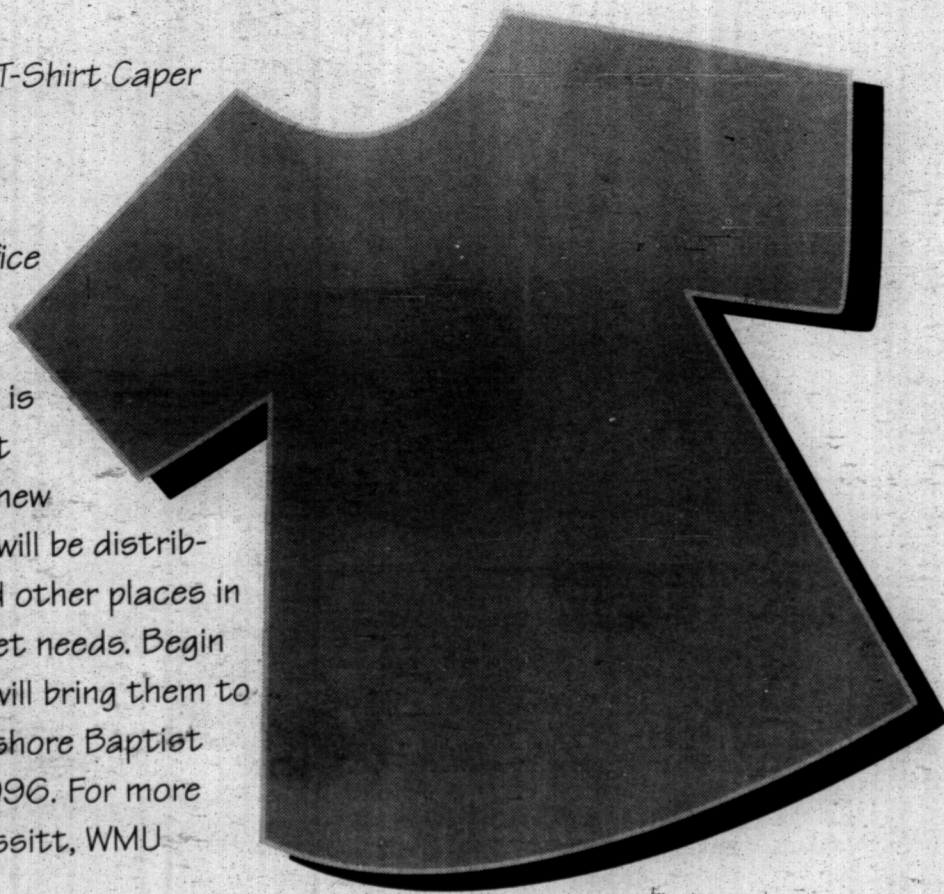
ACTEENS: GREAT T-SHIRT CAPER

WHAT: Participate in Great T-Shirt Caper

WHEN: Throughout 1995-96

RESOURCE: State WMU Office

THE GREAT T-SHIRT CAPER is a nationwide Acteens project which allows girls to donate new and/or used T-Shirts. These will be distributed to Baptist Centers and other places in our state where they will meet needs. Begin collecting your T-Shirts. We will bring them to Acteens Convention at Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, April 12 and 13, 1996. For more information contact Jan Cossitt, WMU Office, at 1-800-748-1651.



WMU ANNUAL MEETING

March 18-19, 1996

"It's Worth the Journey" is the theme for the WMU Annual Meeting at Alta Woods Baptist Church, Jackson. Esther Burroughs of the Home Mission Board, Randy Sprinkle of the Foreign Mission Board, and Joyce Mitchell of "WMU, SBC" will speak in each of the three sessions beginning at 1:45 p.m. Monday and concluding at noon on Tuesday. Music will be led by Eva Hart, conductor, and Carol Joy Sparkman, pianist. Child care will be provided during the sessions by reservation only.

For more information, call the WMU Office in Jackson, 601-968-3800, or 1-800-748-1651 outside Jackson.

MISSION OPPORTUNITIES:

VENEZUELA—

Date: June 15-28, 1996

Place: Rubio, Venezuela

What: Mission Meeting

Need: Team of 14 people to lead VBS for MKs

Cost: \$1,200.00 (includes airfare from Jackson, housing, meals, and local transportation)

If interested, please contact Jan Cossitt, WMU Consultant, 1-800-748-1651 or in Jackson, (601) 968-3800.

1996 - 30 YEAR ANNIVERSARY IN FAMILY MINISTRY

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, Pass Christian, Mississippi



Celebrating the Family

July 1-5, 1996
Celoria Family leading
in Family Worship

Conferences:

- Couples
- Single Parents
- Promise Keepers
- A Woman's Heart
- Youth - "Mini-Centrifuge"
- Children - "TeamKid"
- Preschool - "Preschool TeamKid"

Family devotions
Family worship
Family perspective
(Adventure Recreation)
....Whole Free Day....
Family Olympics

Single Adults

(Memorial Day Weekend)
May 25-27, 1996

"Busting Loose...30 Years in Ministry to Singles"

Activities for the whole day:

1. *Tours:* Swamp, Pass Christian, New Orleans, Ship Island, Canoeing, etc.
2. *Recreation:* Jet skiing, sailing, golf, volleyball, much more!!
3. *Seafood banquet*

Conferences: Self-Esteem, Decision Making, Single Parenting, Breaking The Hurting Cycle, How To Laugh At Myself, more....

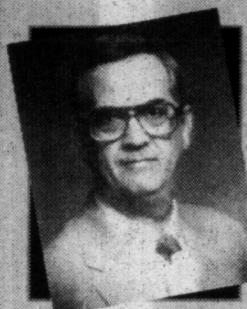
Optionals: Workshops on crafts; "Surf Sounds" (morning watch); Single Perspective (drama/singing)

Personality: Mitch Rayborn, from Omaha, Nebraska, speaker/three recording albums

DECISION MAKING FOR THE 90s

Special Events: Seafood Banquet, Morning Watch, Senior Adult Prospective (drama/singing); workshop on crafts/geneology

SENIOR ADULT I May 14-16, 1996



Speaker: Mose Dangerfield,
Mississippi DT & FM Department
Director
Music: Bill Bacon and
Joymakers, FBC, Clinton

SENIOR ADULT II May 21-23, 1996



Speaker: J. Clark Hensley, former
Senior Adult Consultant
Music: Buddy McElroy and
Liberty Senior Adult Choir

SENIOR ADULT III May 28-31, 1996 (4 days)



Speaker: Horace Kerr, former
Senior Adult Consultant
Music: Cecil Brewer and Victory
Singers, Trinity, Southaven

Featuring Conferences on:
Decision Is Yours
When I Look at Myself in the Mirror
Bible Answers for Senior Adults
Power Encounter (prayer)
Others....

WOMEN'S CELEBRATION

February 2 & 3, 1996
First Baptist Church, Clinton



Lee Ezell



Anne Davis



Madeline Mims

Cost: \$15

(includes program, limited insurance, 2 breaks)

Schedule

Friday
7:00 p.m. Welcome
7:15 p.m. Music - Madeline Mims
7:30 p.m. Bible Study - Anne Davis
8:15 p.m. Music - Madeline Mims
9:00 p.m. Lee Ezell
9:45 p.m. Autograph Party (refreshments)
Saturday
8:00 a.m. Music - Madeline Mims
8:15 a.m. Bible Study - Anne Davis
9:00 a.m. Music - Madeline Mims
9:15 a.m. Lee Ezell
10:00 a.m. Break (Refreshments Provided)
10:45 a.m. Music - Madeline Mims
11:00 a.m. Bible Study - Anne Davis
11:45 a.m. Music - Madeline Mims
Noon Lee Ezell
1:00 p.m. Dismiss

Motels

COMFORT INN (Clinton) - 924-9364
1 Adult - \$50.00 plus tax
2 Adults - \$55.00 plus tax
(\$5.00 each additional adult)

HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS (Clinton) 924-0064
\$55.00 plus tax - up to 4 per room

COMFORT INN - 922-5600
(Greenway Dr., off I-20)
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2 Queen Beds - \$55.00 for 2 adults;
\$60.00 for 3 or more adults
Suites - (2 people) - \$60.00
Jacuzzi Room - \$75.00
(All rooms have a microwave and refrigerator.)

BEST WESTERN METRO INN - 355-7483
Single outside - \$41.00 plus tax
Double outside - \$45.00 plus tax
Single inside (pool side) - \$45.00 plus tax
Double inside (pool side) - \$49.00 plus tax
(\$5.00 each additional adult)

RAMADA INN SOUTHWEST (Metro) 944-1150
Single - \$49.00 plus tax
Double - \$55.00 plus tax
(Up to 4 per room)

HOLIDAY INN - Highway 80 West 355-3472
\$58.00 plus tax
up to 4 per room

If you are interested in registering for Women's Celebration, contact the Woman's Missionary Union of the MBCB at 1-800-748-1651.

HOUSE TOPS

Staff Changes

Thursday, December 14, 1995

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 5

Lewis Jones of Broadmoor Church, Jackson, has been called to Calvary Church, Canton, as interim music director.

Linwood Church, Union, has called **Jerry Bishop** as pastor, effective Nov. 5. A native of Neshoba County, he received his education at Clarke College, Mississippi College, and New Orleans Seminary. His previous place of service was First Church, Durant.

Sara Buckley recently accepted the call of **First Church, McLain,** as minister of music/youth. A native of Easley, S.C., she received her degree in music at William Carey College.

Handsboro Church, Gulfport, has called **Tommy Vowell** as minister of youth, effective Dec. 10. A native of Chattanooga, Tenn., he is a graduate of the University of Tennessee and New Orleans Seminary. H. Gregg Thomas is pastor.

Bethesda Church, Terry, has called **Jason Cox** as minister of

youth and music. His previous place of service was youth minister at Trinity Church, Cordova, Tenn. Cox spent his childhood in West Africa where his parents served as missionaries. Marty Wilson is pastor.

Paul Truitt Memorial Church, Pearl, has called **Ted Dukes** as pastor. A native of Rankin County, Dukes is a graduate of Mississippi College with bachelor of arts and master's degrees in Marriage and Family Therapy. He received his master of divinity from New Orleans Seminary, where he is currently working on a doctoral degree.

Lifeline Church, Florence, has called **Tom Allen** of Pearl as part-time minister of youth, effective Dec. 1. Allen is a student at Wesley College in Florence. Gwen South is Lifeline pastor.



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Just for the Record

Terry Road Church, Jackson, will observe Senior Adult Day on Dec. 31. The observation will include a lunch at the church following the morning worship service. Charlie Myers, former pastor of Alta Woods Church, Jackson, will be the featured speaker. James Netherland will direct the music. The evening worship service will include a mini-concert by the Pearl Quartet.

Gray's Creek Church in Hernando lost its facilities to a fire on Dec. 5. The origin of the blaze is unknown. The sanctuary, education building (less than two years old), pianos, organs, pews, and other furnishings were a total loss. John Perkins, director of missions for Northwest Association, said Gray's Creek members are "in good spirits and making plans for the future." W.E. Cothern is Gray's Creek interim pastor.

Mississippi College's Division of Continuing Education will hold the John Smith School of Real Estate on Dec. 19 beginning at 8 a.m. The school is open to anyone interested in a career in real estate. The program costs \$80, and includes lunch. Topics include: Becoming a Real Estate Professional, Personal Growth and Development, and License Law. Participants may register for any or all of the three topic segments. For more information or to register, call Shaun Hand at (601) 925-3264.

First Church, Yazoo City, will present Billy Trotter in a concert of organ music on Dec. 17 at



Shady Grove Church, Batesville, recently held a recognition service for its GAs and Acteens. The theme was "Letting our Light Shine." GAs, pictured from left, front row, are Rachel Brower, Amber Reasons, Brittany Holliday, Courtney Perkins, Alicia Bailey, Ashley Manning, and Amy Perkins. Acteens, second row, are Brooke Moore, Michelle Brower, Nicole Goodwin, Gail Perkins, and Nikki Holden. All Acteens were recognized for completing the Queen level in StudiAct.



Harmony Church, Crystal Springs, held ground breaking ceremonies for a new sanctuary on Oct. 29. Pictured from left, are Larry Bell, deacon chairman; Dennis Berry, committee member; Glenn Miles, trustee chairman; Kathy Parker, committee member; Jane Saul, committee member; Mike Webb, building committee chairman; Clark Stewart, pastor; and Harold Brumfield, architect.

3 p.m. Trotter is assistant professor of music and college organist at Mississippi College. The program is free, and will be followed by a reception in the church fellowship hall. For more information, call the church at (601) 746-2471.

Puckett Church, Rankin Association, will present its Christmas musical on Sunday, Dec. 17 at 7 p.m. For more information, call the church at (601) 825-5857. Barry Ward is pastor.

Annette Cox, former WMU officer, dies

Annette B. Cox, 80, died Dec. 5 of cancer at her daughter's home in Natchez.

Funeral services were held Dec. 8 at First Church, Brandon, with burial in Brandon Memorial Cemetery.

Cox, a Jackson native, was a member of First Church, Brandon, where she served through the Woman's Missionary Union, the senior adult choir, and the 49-Plus Club.

She was a former state Woman's Missionary Union officer and was instrumental in organizing her church's library.

Her husband Carey pastored First Church, West Point, and First Church, Brandon, before serving as executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation from 1968-76, and again briefly in 1987.

In addition to her husband, Mrs. Cox is survived by two sons, Ernest of Melbourne, Fla., and Robert of Newport News, Va.; a daughter, Sarah Cotton of Natchez; six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

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Names in the News



Hope Church, West Point, honored its pastor, **Avery Jones**, with a surprise appreciation service on Oct. 22. The church presented him with a monetary gift. Pictured with Jones is his wife Vernie.



Deacon ordination services were held at Highland Church, Crystal Springs, on Nov. 12. **Ronnie Whittington** (left) is a newly-ordained deacon. **Bill Hudson** (right) is Highland Church pastor.



William B. Webb and his wife Senita will both officially retire from Midway Church, Meridian, on Dec. 31. William has served as Midway pastor for over 29 years; Senita has been Midway music director for over 27 years. A reception honoring the Webbs will be held in the church's family life center on Dec. 17 at 2 p.m. For more information, call the church at (601) 483-5497.

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — **W. Peyton Thurman**, 82, former dean of students at Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky., died Nov. 28 in a Louisville nursing home following an illness of two years. He served as dean of students at Southern Seminary from 1957-72. Thurman is survived by his wife, Mary Jane, a son, a daughter and four grandchildren.

Martha Ellen Jackson of Florence, and **Wyatt Tullos Jr.** of Clinton, Mississippi College student athletes, have won the 1994-1995 David M. Halbrook Certificate for Academic Achievement Among Athletes. The awards, which recognize student athletes with high academic achievements, were

established in 1984 by the Mississippi legislature. The awards program is made possible through endowments from State Representative David M. Halbrook of Belzoni and his brothers, John C. and James G. Halbrook of Belzoni and J.A. Halbrook of Beaumont, Texas. Jackson, a senior psychology major, is the daughter of Andrew David Jackson and Julia Barlow Jackson of Florence. She is a member of the softball team. Tullos, a senior history/pre-legal major, is the son of Wyatt Tullos Sr. and Glenda Tullos of Clinton. He is a member of the baseball team.

Donald E. Brown, Foreign Mission Board representative in Israel, is working with the board's Personnel Selection Department as a missionary enlistment assistant in Mississippi. Through February, Brown will travel throughout Mississippi urging pastors and other Southern Baptists to pray about becoming foreign missionaries. Brown, from Vivian, La., and his wife, the former Elsie Word from Clarksdale, can be contacted at Route 2, Box 403, Holly Springs, MS 38635, or call (601) 224-8659.

INDIANAPOLIS (BP) — **John Yeats**, 45, editor of a Baptist conservative newsletter in Texas has been elected editor of the **Indiana Baptist**, the official biweekly publication of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana (SBCI). Yeats, pastor of South Park Church in Grand Prairie,

Texas, received unanimous support from the SBCI executive board when presented during their regular meeting Nov. 28. In addition to serving several churches in Texas, Yeats spent 13 years as a pastor in the new work area of Topeka, Kan. He will serve as communications director for the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, with responsibilities for editing the 5,000-circulation **Indiana Baptist**, directing public relations, and serving as Christian life consultant. He assumes his responsibilities Jan. 8.

Julian West, pastor of Iuka Church, Iuka, was honored with a retirement reception on Nov. 12. He had served the congregation for over 11 years, and been in ministry for 41 years. West and his wife have moved to Wrens, Ga., to be near their family.

J.V. McCrory, a professor of English at William Carey College in Hattiesburg, has authored a collection of poetry that will be available in stores Jan. 27. **On the Edge**, a volume of some 40 poems, explores emotion and experience, seeking to isolate and preserve the "infinite moment," according to the author.

Landrum P. Leavell II of Wichita Falls, Texas; **Jean Pittman Williams** and **Roy Ward** of Jackson; and **Gayle Long Wicker** of Tupelo have been named to the Mississippi College board of trustees. Leavell is the retired president of New Orleans Seminary, and pastor emeritus of First Church, Wichita Falls; Williams is a former music teacher; Ward is president of Horne CPA Group; and Wicker is a corporate officer in Long Enterprises, Inc. They join 17 other trustees.



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Christmas Programs

Griffith Memorial Church, Jackson, will present "Because It's Christmas," on Dec. 17 at 6 p.m. in the church sanctuary. The program is a production of the music ministry, under the direction of Anthony Turner, minister of music. Bruce Capleman is pastor.

Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, will present "Reunion '95: A Place Where Hope is Still Alive," Dec. 15 and 16 at 7 p.m., and Dec. 17 at 4 p.m. The program will feature a 30-foot lighted tree, the Celebration Choir and Orchestra, accompanied by biblical drama vignettes. For more information or ticket reservations, call the church at (601) 925-6434.

Calvary Church, Canton, will present its Christmas cantata, "All Through the Night," on Dec. 17 at 6 p.m. Lewis Jones will direct the production.

Cleary Church, Florence, will present "The Promise" on

Dec. 16-18 at 7 p.m. The production involved a choir and drama cast of over 80 people, depicting the birth, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. For more information, call the church at (601) 845-2020.

The choir of Union Church, Stewart, will present its Christmas Cantata, "Make Room for Christmas," on Dec. 17 at 6 p.m. Howard Davis is pastor.

Correction

An item in the "Names in the News" segment of the Dec. 7 issue of **The Baptist Record** incorrectly named a SeniorSing participant. She should have been identified as **Hattie Johnson**. She and her fellow Opsimathy Award winner are members of **Parkway Church, Clinton**. The error was due to erroneous information.

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By Andy Brasher
Isaiah 9

Webster's Dictionary defines despair as a loss of hope. During the Christmas season, statistics show that more people commit suicide or contemplate suicide than at any other time of the year. The reason given most often is despair.

It's easy for the lie of despair to dictate and motivate our actions during a season where hope — not despair — should rule. How frequently do we forget — especially at Christmas — those individuals who are lonely, hungry, sick, and often feel unloved.

This sense of hopelessness can affect anyone at any age. The only prerequisite for despair is suffering. A suffering that can either be mental, physical, spiritual, or all the above. During this season, there are literally millions of people who are in despair.

These are the individuals whom the church should seek out, reach out to, and love unconditionally. These are the ones whom the terrible lie of despair has taken captive. This lie repetitively pronounces to them a discouraging feeling of loss. It is this very lie that the church must attack with love and with the proclamation of the coming of the King.

Reversal of calamity (v. 1). In 733 B.C., the king of Assyria, Tiglath-pileser III, had annexed the land given to the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali. This region would later be called Galilee.

The Assyrian king's rule was harsh and the suffering of the Hebrew people was great. Isaiah prophesied that this region would, in the future, experience a reversal of this calamity. In due time, God would reverse their suffering into splendor.

No matter what calamity you are facing in life, God can turn your scars into stars. For this reversal to happen, we must put our trust in him.

Light for people in darkness (vv. 2-5). Isaiah told the tribes that God would turn their darkness into light. Even for adults, darkness is sometimes frightening and lonely. Darkness brings on the feeling of being alone, afraid, and abandoned. In time of intense suffering, darkness often overshadows us physically, mentally, and spiritually. There are a number of people around who are living in the darkness of despair. It should be our goal to share with them the "light."

Interestingly, the light of day always fades the loneliness and hopelessness of the dark of night. The light brings comfort to the hurting and peace to the restless. The light of Christ far exceeds the light of day, for the light of Christ is the only illumination that can truly make our darkness fade and disappear. We, as Christians, must share that "light" with those who are less fortunate than ourselves.

The coming of the King (vv. 6-7). Isaiah concluded his prophecy with the foretelling of the coming of the King. Without a doubt, Isaiah painted the perfect picture of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Christ is the only one who could live up to these titles: "Wonderful Counselor," "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," and "Prince of Peace." Only Christ could rule forever from the throne of David, and he is the only one who should rule your life as well.

If you will call upon him, he will establish his throne in your heart bringing you peace and hope, thus eliminating the despair and suffering you might be experiencing.

There is hope for those who despair. Indeed, there is hope for you!

Brasher is pastor of Como Church, Como.

Bible Book For such a time as this



By Larry McDonald
Esther 3, 4, 7

Charles Swindoll said you know it's going to be a bad day when....

- * You wake up face down on the pavement;
- * You call suicide prevention and they put you on hold;
- * You see a 60 Minutes news team waiting in your office;
- * Your birthday cake collapses from the weight of the candles;
- * You turn on the news and they're showing emergency routes out of the city;
- * Your twin sister forgets your birthday;
- * You wake up to discover that your waterbed broke and then realize you don't have a waterbed;
- * Your horn goes off accidentally and remains stuck as you follow a group of Hell's Angels on the freeway.

Barbara Johnson tells of an advertisement in the newspaper which read: "LOST DOG with 3 legs, blind in left eye, missing right ear, tail broken, and recently castrated. Answers to the name of 'Lucky'."

On Feb. 15, 1947, Glenn Chambers boarded a plane bound for Quito, Ecuador, to begin his ministry in missionary broadcasting. But he never arrived. In a horrible moment, the plane carrying Chambers crashed into a mountain peak and spiraled downward.

Later it was learned that before leaving the Miami airport, Chambers decided to write his mother a letter. All he could find for stationery was a page of advertising on which was written the single word, "Why?"

Around that word "why" he hastily scribbled a final note. After Chambers's mother learned of her son's death, his letter arrived. She opened the envelope, took out the paper, and unfolded it. Staring her in the face was the question "Why?"

As the events of the lives of Mordecai and Esther unfold, we can see many "bad and unlucky times" as well as situations that would prompt the question, "Why?" Tucked away in this book is the phrase "for such a time as this" (4:14). Even though the name of God is never mentioned in this book, his sovereign handiwork is seen each step of the way.

Haman was elevated to the highest position of honor the king could bestow upon someone. All of the other royal officials bowed down to Haman to pay him honor (3:2). Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman. Haman was enraged and plotted to kill all of Mordecai's people, the Jews (3:5-6). Haman went so far as to get the king to issue an official decree that said on a certain day all Jews were to be annihilated (3:12-14).

Mordecai knew Esther was strategically positioned to be used by God to save her people. He felt that God had prepared Esther for a time such as this (4:13-16). I can only imagine that Esther had doubted herself and her situation many times.

Why was she chosen as queen? Why were her people selected to be killed? Why was she the one to approach the king? What if he rejected her request?

Esther did not know the answers to all of her questions, but she definitely knew the One in whom she was to trust. She had people all over praying and fasting for her and her approach to the king. If the king refused her request, it meant death for her and her people. Esther was a woman of courage.

Esther planned a banquet with a festive atmosphere. At this banquet the king asked her for her request. Esther told the king of how her people were set up for slaughter and annihilation. She identified Haman as the man behind the plot. The king was outraged at the events. He ordered Haman to be hanged (7:3-6). Then he issued an edict that allowed the Jews to organize and defend themselves against any army that came against them. The Jewish people were delivered, and they developed a celebration called the "Feast of Purim" in order to remember these events.

Perhaps you are going through times you do not understand. Remember, God is preparing you for unique things. We must remain people of courage. Corrie Ten Boom said, "If God sends us on stony paths, he provides strong shoes."

McDonald is pastor of Castlewoods Church, Brandon.

Life and Work The Good Shepherd



By Bob Rogers
John 10

Have you ever been divorced, failed at business, lost your job, suffered depression, lost a close family member in death, had a serious illness, or lost your home to fire or storm?

To whom did you look for guidance?

Jesus said that we are like sheep in need of a shepherd to lead us. However, some of us follow thieves, some follow hired hands, and some follow the Good Shepherd. How can you know the difference?

The thief (v. 10). Verse 10 says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

The thief represents false religion. In 1978, Jim Jones led nearly a thousand American followers of his People's Temple to commit mass suicide in Guyana. In 1993, David Korsh, claiming to be the Messiah, led almost 100 Branch Davidians to a fiery death in Waco, Texas. History is full of stories of destruction at the hands of false religion; these are only recent examples.

In less spectacular ways, false or legalistic religion steals life from people, like the Pharisees who would "tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them" (Matt. 23:3).

The prophet Ezekiel said that such shepherds allowed the sheep to become "food for all the wild animals... scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them" (Ezek. 34:5-6).

Is your shepherd a thief? You can tell if he cannot give you meaningful life. Jesus said in verse 10, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." If your shepherd steals your joy rather than giving it to you, he's a thief, not the Good Shepherd.

The hired hand (vv. 12-13). The hired hand represents religion which appears harmless, but cannot really help you. He doesn't own the sheep, "so when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away." He "runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep" (vv. 12-13).

The hired hand may be a well-meaning person or a "good" lifestyle. When "the wolf" of trouble comes against you, you cannot find real peace or hope from this kind of religion.

Through Ezekiel, God warned: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock?" (Ezek. 34:2).

Is your shepherd a hired hand? You can tell if he only helps you when he can help himself, but he will not sacrifice himself for your benefit. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (v. 11). Jesus Christ laid down his life for us on the cross, and a true shepherd will follow his sacrificial example (John 15:13).

The Good Shepherd (vv. 14-18). In contrast to the thief and hired hand, in verses 14-18, Jesus gives a further description of himself as the Good Shepherd:

- The Good Shepherd gives us a personal relationship with God through faith in him. In verses 14-15 Jesus said that he knows the name of his sheep and they know his name, just as it is between him and the Father.

- The Good Shepherd unites Christians rather than dividing them. The "other sheep" in verse 16 are other followers from a different background, such as another race or another type of Bible-believing church.

- The Good Shepherd has true spiritual power. You can find spiritual strength against any trial because of his power. Jesus said that he had the final authority over his own death and resurrection. "I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again" (v. 18). Thus Jesus later told Pontius Pilate, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above" (John 19:11).

Only Jesus Christ can do all these things, because he alone is the Good Shepherd.

Class activity: List on the board the seven troubles in the first paragraph. Ask class members to describe how people can cope with each trouble, and how Jesus helps us.

Rogers is pastor of First Church, Poplarville.



Reshaping Our
World View



capsules

CONGRESS UNDERGIRDS CHARITIES AGAINST CLASS-ACTION LITIGATION: WASHINGTON (BP) — The U.S. House of Representatives and Senate have resoundingly passed legislation to protect the nation's charities. In back-to-back votes Nov. 28 and 29, the two houses of Congress passed the Charitable Gift Annuity Antitrust Relief Act of 1995 (H.R. 2525) and the Philanthropy Protection Act of 1995 (H.R. 2519) to clarify federal securities and antitrust laws. The House passed the gift annuity bill by a vote of 427-11 and was unanimous in its support of the philanthropy act. The Senate passed both bills unanimously. President Clinton is expected to sign them into law the week of Dec. 4. The bills affirm that antitrust and securities laws do not apply to charitable organizations and donations or gifts made to the charities in the form of charitable gift annuities or charitable trusts. They were introduced in response to a lawsuit brought in U.S. District Court in Wichita Falls, Texas, demanding that the nation's charities return donations made through charitable gift annuities and charitable trusts and pay triple damages. The suit was certified as a class action in October. Among the defendants were the Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptist Foundation of Texas. Dismissal of the lawsuit will be sought as soon as the bills become law. Gift annuities have been used by the nation's charities and nonprofit organizations, including denominational entities, for more than 100 years.

MONEY'S "BEST BUYS" DROPS SAMFORD, BAYLOR: BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — *Money* magazine has dropped Samford University and Baylor University from its "best buys" list because of their emphasis on religion. Each year *Money* magazine evaluates the nation's colleges and universities to determine which schools offer the top education values. Last year *Money* ranked Samford 41st and Baylor 34th on its list of "best buy" schools. But this year Samford and Baylor were dropped from the list. The rankings appeared in the 1996 edition of the personal-finance monthly's special *Money* Guide: *Your Best College Buys Now*. According to the magazine, the "rankings include only schools whose curriculum and campus life make students of any (or no) faith feel welcome."

SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS ZERO BY TEACHER ON "LIFE OF CHRIST": WASHINGTON (BP) — The U.S. Supreme Court has allowed to stand an appeals court ruling upholding a Tennessee junior high teacher's refusal to accept a research paper on the life of Jesus. The decision, a Southern Baptist church-state specialist stated, is a misinterpretation of the First Amendment and demonstrates why a constitutional amendment to protect religious expression is needed. In *Settle vs. Dickson County School Board*, a teacher refused to grant permission for a paper titled, "The Life of Jesus Christ," and gave a grade of zero to Brittney Settle. Subjects approved by the teacher included spiritualism, reincarnation, and magic religions. The teacher in the central Tennessee county gave several reasons for rejecting the paper, including saying "the law says we are not to deal with religious issues in the classroom." The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals held all of the teacher's reasons fell "within the broad leeway of teachers to determine the nature of the curriculum and the grades to be awarded to students, even the reasons that may be mistaken." The Supreme Court announced Nov. 27 it would not grant a review of the appeals court's opinion.

FELLOWSHIP APPROVES RELIEF FUNDS FOR BOSNIA: BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) — The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is sending \$91,000 in relief funds to the former Yugoslavia. The Atlanta-based Fellowship's Global Missions Ministry Group approved the appropriations in a meeting Nov. 30 in Birmingham, Ala. The group also approved other relief funds for use in northern Iraq, the Caucasus region in the former Soviet Union and south Georgia for cleanup after Hurricane Opal. About \$30,500 will buy five 24-ton truckloads of potatoes to be delivered into Bosnia by a Croatian Baptist group that works closely with a Canadian missionary. Another five truckloads of potatoes will be sent to refugee-camp destinations in Croatia, where they will be used to feed Bosnian refugees and displaced Croats and Serbs. An additional two 20-ton containers of corn seed will be delivered to Croatia through Croatian Baptist Aid, in cooperation with Baptist World Aid, the Baptist World Alliance relief arm. The cost is \$15,000.

ASIAN COMMUNICATORS URGED TO HARNESS HI-TECH ADVANCES: SEOUL, South Korea (BP) — Fear not today's "wired world," but use it for the gospel, a Southern Baptist media leader told a group of 40-plus church communicators from Korea, the Philippines, India, and Sri Lanka. "Every Chinese village has a dish and satellite," he noted, "and in our world today, there are few if any villages that are not electronically wired." Jack Johnson, president of the Radio and Television Commission, told a communications seminar in Seoul, South Korea, Nov. 29-Dec. 1. "We must combine the Great Commission with a technology imperative if we are to 'saturate the world' with the gospel in a way that the viewer will absorb, understand it, and embrace it," he said at the event sponsored by the Baptist World Alliance's division of communications, the Asian Baptist Federation and the Far East Broadcasting Company of Korea. The Spirit of Christ can be trusted to lead Christian communicators in a time of sweeping changes in the world of technology, Johnson said.

Doctoral degree can be badge of commitment — or sign of sloth

By Joe E. Trull

Has your minister been "doctored"? The title "doctor" is common among today's clergy.

One church member quipped, "My preacher is dying by degrees!"

What kind of doctor is your minister — Th.D., Ph.D., Ed.D., D.Min., or D.D.? Do you know the difference?

You may not think it matters. It may not. But in some instances, the title of "Dr." may be sought for the wrong reason or given for less than appropriate preparation and study.

A recent call from a former student revealed a tragic example.

His church had just called a pastor, whose "Dr." title was an important consideration.

Inquiry revealed the degree was awarded by an unaccredited "seminary" which required no prerequisite degrees and only minimal correspondence lessons. (Some groups of schools also have developed "bogus" accrediting agencies.) In about 18 months, for a fee, an applicant can receive a doctor of theology degree from one of these institutions.

"Is this not deception?" asked my friend on the phone. As a teacher of Christian ethics and as a former pastor, to me this practice

seems to violate ministerial integrity in three major ways:

First, to obtain a "bogus" mail-order degree and pretend it is on the same level as an accredited doctorate is duplicitous, which the Bible condemns (Acts 5:1-11).

Second, if the motive for obtaining the doctorate — genuine or otherwise — is to impress others, then the minister is guilty of pride. Neither hypocrisy nor vanity belongs in the life of the ordained minister (1 Tim. 3:1-7).

Third, to take educational "short-cuts" in order to avoid the work and discipline of earning an accredited degree is a character flaw which usually shows up in other areas of ministry.

Hard-earned and accredited academic degrees are appropriate preparation for ministers and ministry. Generally, they fall into three categories: (1) research doctorates, such as the Ph.D. (doctor of philosophy) in religion, the Th.D. (doctor of theology), and the Ed.D. (doctor of education), prepare ministers for teaching, writing, and administrative leadership; (2) practical doctorates, such as the D.Min. (doctor of ministry) degree, are designed to enhance the skills and abilities of church ministers in their calling; (3) honorary doctorates, such as the D.D. (doctor of divinity), are usually conferred by colleges and seminaries upon outstanding pastors and religious leaders who have rendered extraordinary service in their churches and denominations.

Competency in ministry is important. Churches should encourage their ministers to continue training and development throughout their ministries. Servants of God who make sacrifices to improve their ministerial skills are to be commended. The real reward is not human accolades, but the blessing of increased service to God and humanity.

Trull is professor of Christian ethics at New Orleans Seminary.



Newton Co.'s boxes of joy

Greg Boggan, member of Hickory Church, Hickory, helped pack, label, and load some special boxes at the Newton Associational office. Each Operation Christmas Child box was filled with shoe boxes; each shoe box in turn was filled with Christmas gifts, school supplies, personal hygiene items, and candy for children in war-torn Bosnia, Croatia, and Baghdad. Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse, an international relief organization directed by Franklin Graham, son of evangelist Billy Graham. The boxes were shipped on Nov. 28 to Samaritan's Purse headquarters in Harrisburg, N.C., where each shoe box will receive its final addition: a pamphlet which will tell about Christ in the language of its recipient. Newton Association served as the distribution center for 1,716 shoe boxes from Mississippi, Alabama, and Arkansas. The pastor of Poplar Springs Church, John M. Boggan (and Greg's father), attended a Billy Graham Evangelism School this summer, and learned of Operation Christmas Child. As director of the association missions development committee, the elder Boggan led Newton volunteers in assembling 1,000 of the boxes. Roadway trucking company shipped the boxes free to North Carolina.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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RX VBTF BE FYFSXWK KREF, DVRAV UBI, YVWY
AWXXBY KRF, TSBGRHFI PFBSF YVF DBSKI
PFUWX;

YRYOH BXF, YDB

This week's clue: X equals N.

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: James Five: Eight.

Baptist Record

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